

*To George Hays
with respects of the
Author.*

VALEDICTORY ADDRESS

TO THE

GRADUATING CLASS

OF THE

Philadelphia College of Medicine,

May 6
AT THE

ANNUAL COMMENCEMENT,

March 2nd, 1859.

BY

J. AITKEN MEIGS, M. D.,

PROFESSOR OF THE INSTITUTES OF MEDICINE,

ONE OF THE CONSULTING PHYSICIANS TO THE PHILADELPHIA HOSPITAL, ETC.

PHILADELPHIA:

FROM BRYSON'S PRINTING ROOMS, NO. 2 NORTH SIXTH STREET.

1859.

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1859.

CORRESPONDENCE.

PHILADELPHIA COLLEGE OF MEDICINE,

February 24th, 1859.

At a meeting of the Graduating Class of the Philadelphia College of Medicine held February 24th, 1859, at the College Hall, S. G. SNOWDEN of Pennsylvania, was called to the chair, and O. T. BUNDY, Jr., of New York, appointed Secretary. On motion, it was

Resolved, That a Committee be appointed by the Chairman, to request Prof. J. A. MEIGS, to transmit to us for publication, a copy of his Valedictory Address, to be delivered at the approaching Commencement.

O. T. BUNDY, Jr., Secretary.

PROF. J. A. MEIGS.

DEAR SIR:—

The undersigned were, in accordance with the foregoing, appointed that Committee; and, in requesting you to transmit to us a copy of your Valedictory Address, permit us to express the high respect and esteem entertained for you by the ~~the~~ Committee and Class.

Very respectfully yours,

M. LAMPEN, Pa.
CHARLES W. HOUGHTON, Vt.
MANNING F. CROSS, N. J.
S. T. OVERSTREET, Fla.
R. P. WILLIAMS, Va.

Committee.

PHILADELPHIA COLLEGE OF MEDICINE,

February 25th, 1859.

GENTLEMEN:—

In compliance with the polite request contained in your very complimentary note of yesterday, I place at your disposal the manuscript of my Valedictory Address.

Accept for yourselves and the Class my heartiest wishes for your future prosperity and happiness.

Ever truly, your friend,

J.AITKEN MEIGS,

To Messrs. M. LAMPEN, CHAS. W. HOUGHTON,

MANNING F. CROSS, S. T. OVERSTREET and R. P. WILLIAMS,

Committee.

VALEDICTORY ADDRESS.

GENTLEMEN—GRADUATES IN MEDICINE :

Only a few years ago, having finished your collegiate or general education, you emerged from the quietude of the school-house to take your part in that bustling work of the world, which is ever being done, yet is never completed. And as you gazed irresolutely yet hopefully upon the busy throng around you, in which great actions and mean, good deeds and bad, lofty aspirations and grovelling desires so strangely blend, you began, for the first time, perhaps, in your young lives, to reflect seriously upon that momentous question which obtrudes itself upon most men at the outset of their career, and will not be denied an answer. What shall I do that I may obtain the wherewithal by which to live ? Such the question which gradually assumed a weighty aspect as you pondered ever the more thoughtfully and anxiously upon it. But as you pondered, the inquiry took a philanthropic form ; and so you queried : How may I earn my daily bread, and in so doing, accomplish the greatest good for my fellow men ? Not in divinity, not in law, nor in commerce, nor yet in the various handicrafts to which men devote their lives and energies, could you find the desired solution. Your mental peculiarities led you to see in the *Healing Art* alone, a satisfactory answer. So resolving that this ancient and honorable art should become to you a life-long task, you abandoned the comforts and pleasures of home, and straightway repaired to this city—the acknowledged Medical Metropolis of our Union—willing and solicitous to bestow labor, and money, and time, and to undergo much self-denial in the accomplishment of your resolution. Once in this city, that

“————— Divinity that shapes our ends,
Rough hew them how we will,”

directed your uncertain feet to the portals of that College whose classic title, borrowed from the city of its birth, so appropriately expresses that sublime and benevolent idea which finds in practical medicine its most noble realization. Its mission of love and humanity this College is even now fulfilling, in sending you, after several years of toilsome preparation, forth into the world, to minister to the sick and the suffering, and to console the heart-broken wherever, and under whatever circumstances they may be found.

You presented yourselves to the Faculty of this College—to my colleagues and to me,—and entered with us into a solemn compact. You covenanted and agreed to be faithful in your attendance upon medical lectures, and to consult your books diligently by day and by night. You promised also, to be busy among the dead in the dissecting-room, among the bed-ridden sick of our hospitals, and amidst the lame, the halt, the blind, and variously ailing, that crowd in their misery to our clinics and infirmaries. All this you have well and

faithfully done. The early sun beheld you at your posts ; the nightly stars still saw you wrestling with your tasks like Jacob, in the olden time, with the evangel of the Lord. You furthermore agreed to subject yourselves finally, to a rigid examination, that your attainments in medicine and your qualifications to practice the *ars medendi* might be thoroughly tested. Through this ordeal, no light one, as you well know, you have satisfactorily and honorably passed, and in testimony thereof, the diploma of the PHILADELPHIA COLLEGE OF MEDICINE has just been granted to you in this gracious presence.

And now, full of hope and energy, but with powers as yet untried ; like mettled chargers champing the bit, and fretting under the tightened rein, you stand, ready and eager to hurry forth upon that dusty, care-worn and sorrow-stricken road which men call life.

At the request of my colleagues, and in obedience to a time-honored custom, I stand here to bid you "God-speed," and to pour into your ears a few words of advice, ere you set out upon this road, and in the uncertain shadows of the future, are lost, it may be, forever from our sight.

With this hour terminate the tranquil and irresponsible days of your student-life ; with this hour commences an anxious, deeply responsible and life-long struggle with disease and death. Yesterday you were busily engaged in studying the perils which await upon the birth of men, the dangers which encompass the lives of all young children, and the thousand maladies which dog the steps of youth, of the adult and the aged man. Armed with such knowledge, you go forth to-day the earthly arbiters of life and death—sleepless watchers at the entrances and exits of this life.

Your vocation is to take care of the sick and to restore them to health ; or, failing this, to palliate their sufferings and prolong their lives. From the *Code of Ethics*, this day placed in your hands, you will learn that it is your duty, also, as good citizens, to be ever vigilant for the sanitary welfare of the community, ever ready to counsel the public upon all matters concerning medical police, public hygiene and legal medicine. It is your "province to enlighten the public in regard to quarantine regulations,—the location, arrangement and dietaries of hospitals, asylums, schools, prisons, and similar institutions,—in relation to the medical police of towns, as drainage, ventilation, &c.,—and in regard to measures for the prevention of epidemic and contagious diseases ; and when pestilence prevails, it is your duty to face the danger, and to continue your labors for the alleviation of the suffering, even at the jeopardy of your own lives. You should also be always ready when called on by the legally constituted authorities, to enlighten coroner's inquests, and courts of justice, on subjects strictly medical,—such as involve questions relating to sanity, legitimacy, murder by poisons or other violent means, and in regard to the various other subjects embraced in the science of medical jurisprudence." To follow a calling involving such duties, something more than an intimate acquaintance with anatomy, physiology, chemistry, therapeutics, and the principles and practice of medicine, surgery, and obstetrics is required. You must be filled with an exalted sense of the onerous duty, the moral obligation, and the profound responsibility which are

inseparably connected with your mission ; and you must come to the work, moreover, with an earnest, sincere and truthful desire to advance the interests of medicine—and thereby the prosperity of men—as far as in you lies the power.

The most of you are destined, perhaps, to become active, private practitioners. Some of you may be called to preside over hospitals, infirmaries, asylums for the insane, and the like. Others among you may come to exercise your art in the army and the navy of your country. To all of you it may happen at any time, to be summoned to aid the ends of justice, by the exhibition of your knowledge. In all these situations the ease, the comfort and the happiness of many people, for good or ill, are in your hands. Weighty then, indeed, is the responsibility which, of your own free-will and accord, you have this day assumed.

Strain your eyes for a moment along the road which lies open before you, and let your mental vision pierce the veil which covers the future. It is midnight. A strong child—an only child it seems—is struggling wildly, gasping for breath. The smothered cry, the hoarse and brazen cough grate harshly and ominously upon your ear, for you well know that the inflammatory and rebellious blood is weaving, with nimble fingers, the net-work of death in the throat of that child. And as the frantic mother grasps your hand and begs you, by all that you hold dear, to stay the destroyer, one glance I catch at your troubled looks, and somehow the scene changes. The houses and streets of a great city are before me—I see men hurrying to and fro, their faces white and ghastly. They shrink from the touch of each other, for the plague-demon holds dread revelry in that town. And the physician is there,—pale, haggard and worn, yet striving manfully to win, at least one victim, from the jaws of the merciless death. And now the city fades, and in its place, upon the sea, appears a ship with sickness and despair full freighted. Famine and fever, and death, have laid their hands heavily upon the crew of that ship ; and amidst the great distress the conscientious surgeon moves from berth to berth, his intellectual and moral being disturbed and sorely tried ; for imminent danger without leagues with perplexity and doubt within, to render him the wretchedest of men. But the ship being gone,

————— Immediately a place
 Before mine eyes appears, sad, noisome, dark ;
 A lazarus-house it seems ; wherein are laid,
 Numbers of all diseased ; all maladies
 Of ghastly spasm, or racking torture, qualms
 Of heart-sick agony, all feverous kinds,
 Convulsions, epilepsies, fierce catarrhs,
 Intestine stone and ulcer, colic pangs,
 Demoniac phrensy, moping melancholy,
 And moonstruck madness, plining atrophy,
 Marasmus and wide-wasting pestilence,
 Dropsies and asthmas, and joint-racking rheums,
 Dire is the tossing, deep the groans ; Despair
 Tendeth the sick, buslest from couch to couch ;
 And over them triumphant Death his dart
 Shakes, but delays to strike, though oft-invoked
 With vows, as their chief good and final hope.”

In some such circumstances, and in the presence of some such spectacles as these, the responsibilities of your profession will come upon you with a crushing

weight. Into the short space of half an hour, it will seem to you that the dread, the anxiety and the embarrassment of years have been crowded. In such moments, you will learn that your peace of mind, and the comfort and well-being of your patients are interwoven threads, and that the only way to preserve the former, is to be thoroughly skilled in all the modes of preserving the latter. I would have you therefore to cultivate, to its utmost, this feeling of responsibility. I would have your sensibilities sharpened as acutely as possible. Responsibility, rightly appreciated, will cause you to come to the work, not with half-heart, and half-knowledge, and zeal half aroused, but full of devotion, full of energy, full of determination to be equal, cost what it may, with the requirements of your calling. Face boldly, then, that anxiety begotten of responsibility, and grapple with it resolutely. It is your friend in disguise—a rough friend it is true, but an honest one—and in the great system of providential compensation, like all dangers to the brave, like all obstacles to the determined, it will become your helper. For this very anxiety is the prolific parent of activity and devotion, and these exerted in behalf of your patients, will build you up strongly in the esteem and confidence of the community. The flower ruthlessly beaten down by the storm, is yet secretly nourished by the rain-drops borne on the wings of that storm. So your trials and anxieties will oft-times bring their own recompence, and you,

“——— like the flower,
May bless the cloud when it hath passed away.”

The medical knowledge which you now possess must be enhanced by diligent study. Every case intrusted to your care will demand of you especial study. Not content with what you know, you must ever be upon the alert to gather in more knowledge,—not so much from books, but rather from the pains, the groans, the throbbing pulse, the hurried breath, the hot and burning, or the cold and clammy skin of your patients. These are the books to which you should frequently turn for instruction. Learn early that your library is in the hospital and the infirmary, on the highway and in the dwellings of the sick. “The great book of nature, which is alike open to all, and is incapable of deceiving,” says the celebrated Dr. Parry, “I have hourly read, and I trust not wholly in vain. During the first twelve or fourteen years of my professional life, I recorded almost every case which occurred to me, either in private practice, or in the chief conduct of an extensive charity.” I advise you to do the same. Take full notes of your cases; study them by day, and dream over them by night, as the enthusiastic Linnaeus is reported to have done over a certain shell. In this way only can you make the book of experience thorough and useful for frequent reference. But while you reap with one hand, you must sow with the other. From this book you must read daily lessons of health to the people. From this book you must read lessons of encouragement to your fellows of the craft. Thus a two-fold activity is required of you—activity in the acquisition of knowledge, activity in dispensing it, in employing it with free and generous hand for the benefit of your fellow men. Freely you have received, and as freely you must give. Grain in the mill comes forth flour to feed the

hungry thousands. So your knowledge must come forth to the healing of many.

Let me exhort you to cultivate diligently the habit of writing. It will do much to define and render accurate your knowledge. As enlightened and grateful physicians, your duty is not fully performed if you do not assist in cultivating the literature of your profession. This literature has been slowly, painfully and laboriously built up in the Ages,—built up at the cost of the money, the time, the sleep and the brains of many worthies who now rest from their labors, and of some living upon whose shoulders the mantle of Elijah has fallen. What would you be without this literature,—this long record of valuable facts? Very helpless children groping in the dark, groping blindly. Can you vaccinate a child without thanking God that there once lived a man called Jenner?—a man who, despite the opposition of his medical cotemporaries, and the contumely of an ignorant people, worked out and placed upon record a great discovery. Every man, woman and child, saved by this discovery from a dangerous and loathsome disease, becomes a living, moving witness that Jenner filled up the measure of his duty to overflowing. When you break up the paroxysms of an intermittent with bark, do you not feel grateful to the Countess of Cinchon, and the old Cardinal de Lugo, for having labored so zealously to disseminate a knowledge of the valuable properties of this drug? Can you ligate an artery, and so arrest hemorrhage, without feeling indebted to Celsus and Albucasis, and especially to Paré? Can you repair a deformed face without dropping a word of praise to the memory of Tagliacotius? If you cure an aneurism by tying the artery which feeds it, does not John Hunter seem to be treating the patient with your hands? When you explore the chest of one whose lungs are emphysematous, or the seat of tubercle, or who suffers from a pericarditis, are you not thankful for the strong light which has been shed upon your path by a Louis and a Laennec? On the other hand, when the names of Rau, and Ruysch, and Roonhuysen, and Chambers are mentioned, are you not filled with abhorrence at the illiberal spirit which caused these men to keep back from the world the valuable secrets and inventions which their genius placed in their hands?

Publish, then, to the profession, any discovery or improvement in medicine or surgery, that you may be so fortunate as to make. To withhold such knowledge, is to become a miser indeed, if not in intent, and intellectual misery is the world's great misery. Do not say that when young you cannot perform this duty, because though burdened with time you have no experience; and that with advanced age, and much business and experience comes the destruction of time. If you would become really great and meritorious physicians, you must abandon this notion now and forever. If you are true to yourselves, you will never forget that young men are the apostles of all new truths the world over. The records of medicine and of science in general—records of which the public, unfortunately for you and me, is profoundly ignorant—teem with the proofs of this proposition. In his 23d year, Vesalius, justly called the Father of Human Anatomy, was appointed by the Republic of Venice, to teach this science in the University of Padua. And he did teach it, and in such a manner as to shed

more lustre upon his chair than he derived from it, very young though he was. In his 29th year he published the greatest work on Anatomy that the world up to that time had ever seen. The illustrious Harvey, we are told by one of his biographers, was probably occupied in the beginning of his career, like young physicians of the present day, among the poor in circumstances, and afflicted in body, taking vast pains without prospect of pecuniary reward. Yet when chosen, in his 37th year, to lecture upon anatomy and surgery before the College of Physicians, he presented in his very first course of lectures, a detailed exposition of those views concerning the circulation of the blood, which afterwards made his name immortal ;—views which he must have been developing long before their enunciation ;—views which were adopted, it is said, by none of his contemporaries who had attained the age of 40 years, but which had to win their way under the safe-guard of the youthful and unprejudiced spirits of 1628 and 1630. Bichat, whose laborious researches are regarded by a recent, able writer, as constituting in their actual and prospective results, the most valuable contribution ever made to physiology by a single mind, died in his 31st year. Cuvier, whom Knox calls the “ first of all descriptive anatomists,” published his memorable *Lecons d’Anatomie Comparée*, in his 31st year, and in that year became a lecturer upon his favorite science, in the *Jardin des Plantes*. In his 26th year, Agassiz had already commenced the publication of that great work, the *Poissons Fossiles*, which gained for him the respect and admiration of the scientific world. It is upon record that Sir Isaac Newton brought forward his doctrine of light and colors before he was twenty ; that Bacon wrote his *Temporis Partus Maximus*, before he had reached that age ; that Montesquieu had planned his *Spirit of Laws* at an equally early period of life ; that Jenner, before his twentieth year was already engaged in developing his great discovery ; and that Linnæus, while yet in his boyhood, dimly conceived his great botanical system. “ Who,” writes Dr. Alfred Stillé, “ has produced the most perfect treatise extant on pneumonia ? The only complete history of the diseases of children ? The only consistent account of neuralgia ? The most perfect history of cancerous diseases ? The first true statement of the pathology of hydrocephalus ; of softening of the brain ; of remittent fever ; of tubercles of the bones ; of alterations of the urine ; of infantile pneumonia ? Such men as Grisolle, Rilliet, Barthez, Valleix, Walshe, Rusz, Gerhard, Green, Durand, Fardel, Stewardson, Nelaton, Bequerel, and so on. All of these, with a single exception, are *young men* ; and yet the authors of works, which by common consent, are placed in the foremost rank of the medical authorities of the present day,”

Trust me, the wants of an age are always represented by the dreams and aspirations of its youth ; and the ambitious longings of the young, at once prophetic and provident, work out their own best answer, as the present foreshadows and moulds the future. When, therefore, the dull world, in its thick and solid ignorance, flings your youth into your very teeth, as proof positive, that you lack experience and skill, and that there is no good thing in you, be not cast down, but take heart from these examples, and heeding not the opinions of men, lay your hand determinedly to the plough, and learn to labor and to wait for

the slow but certain consummation of your hopes. If you would obtain the confidence of the world, you must have confidence in yourselves, you must be animated by the same spirit which impelled Cæsar to say to the affrighted pilot in the storm, " Fear not, thou carriest Cæsar and his fortunes ;" or that actuates Bulwer's Richelieu, when he exclaims,

" ————— my triumphant adamant of soul,
Is but the fixed persuasion of success."

And when in the course of time your self-reliance, your diligence and skill have brought you much business, and made you thereby the slave of the sick public, think not to say now I will rest, now I will take mine ease. Over-many there are in the world who are resting and taking their ease, living upon the labor of others, and returning to the world not a tithe of what they have obtained from it. Think you, Frederic Hoffman rested much while writing those numerous folio volumes the mere titles of which, as Haller informs us, would fill 38 quarto pages ? Think you, Sir Astley Cooper could have been much concerned about his ease, seeing that he published some of his most valuable works at a time in which he was more occupied than any professional individual had perhaps, ever been ? Did not the celebrated Mason Good translate, in the streets of London, that majestic poem of Lueretius, on the *Nature of Things*, during his extensive walks to visit his numerous patients ? Was not Dr. Willis, while translating the works of Harvey, and writing the biography of that brilliant anatomist, " incessantly engaged by night and by day in the laborious and responsible duties of a country practice, enjoying nothing of learned leisure, and snatching from the hours that should rightfully be given to rest, the time that was necessary to composition ?" Look into the annals of a sister profession, and behold Sir Matthew Hale, the eminent English jurist, finding time, in the midst of his herculean legal labors and in his 66th year, to write a work on "*The Primitive Origination of Mankind*." In the preface to a copy of that work, in the library of the Academy of Natural Sciences of this city, I find these note-worthy words :—" It was written at leisure and broken times, and with great intervals and many times hastily, as my busie and important employment of another nature (known to the world,) would give me leave."

But why multiply examples to show you what you *can* do, if you will, what you *should* do if you would perform rightly your duty, what you *WILL* do if you are true to the grand and imperishable instincts of your being. Many there are who will laugh at your efforts, and pronounce them incompatible with the so-called practical duties of your profession. When such speak to you of impossibilities, your answer is plain. It is the answer of Tell to the boatman, when the latter said, " It is impossible to cross the lake in such a storm as this." "I know not," said the Alpine Hero, " whether it be impossible, but I know that it must be attempted."

Though I urge you to the zealous cultivation of purely medical studies, do not make the mistake of supposing that it is your duty to read and think of nothing but disease and the remedies for its relief. The tendency of such injudicious devotion is to contract the mind and shut out from it those large and

comprehensive views of your profession and its relations which you should always seek to obtain, and which you can obtain by the observation and comparison only, of many and diversified facts. The mind is best disciplined and strengthened by a certain well-regulated variety of study. Rightly considered, this variety is a form of rest and recreation ; and these the mind requires as well as the body. A continuous monotone wearies the ear insufferably, and sleep visits the eye too long fixed upon the bending wheat. So the mind exerted over-long upon one subject, loses its vigor and becomes listless and apathetic. From time to time, during your career, therefore, especially in the early days of probation, and of that hope deferred which maketh the heart sick, you may turn your attention with much profit to the collateral sciences. They will serve to enlarge the range of your mental vision. Medicine, it is true, is not a science, yet it originated in, and must be maintained by science. Hence, to be truly rational, and therefore regular practitioners, you must endeavor, as far as possible, to practice and to cultivate your profession as scientific men. If you would become physicians in the highest acceptation of that term, you must be deeply impressed with the scientific claims of medicine. In the crowded middle walks of our profession, these claims are scarcely recognized ; among the people they are unknown. Hence, the latter having no standard by which to judge between the true man and the impostor, are constantly being juggled into the arms of death, not as they fondly suppose secundem artem, but in reality secundem ignorantiam. A vulgar prejudice prevails against the cultivation of science by a physician, and this prejudice, I am sorry to think, is kept alive by certain of the "baser sort," who

"Make sordid wealth the object and sole end
Of their industrious aims."

To a considerable extent scientific investigation is not only compatible with the active, daily duties of the physician, but in reality by inculcating close and accurate habits of observation very often becomes a guarantee of success in the performance of those duties. The truth of this you may learn from the lives and labors of Hunter, Baillic, Prichard, Morton, Drake and many others whose names I might mention. The celebrated Doctor Baillic of London was frequently advised to abandon his anatomical pursuits lest they should interfere with his prosperity as a practitioner. This he wisely refused to do, and ultimately this very knowledge rendered him vastly superior to those who attempted to compete with him in practice. Sir Hans Sloan, the favorite physician of Queen Anne was regarded as one of the greatest naturalists of his day ; yet it is recorded of him that his "great scientific attainments did not act as a bar to his professional advancement, for his practice was very extensive." John Hunter, the surgeon-naturalist of the 18th century, and the "author" as he has justly been called, "of a new era in the history of our profession," found time in the midst of his laborious and successful practice to publish many treatises upon practical surgery, anatomy, physiology and natural history, and to lay the foundation for that natural classification of the animal world which Cuvier afterwards effected. The celebrated Dr. Prichard is extensively and

chiefly known to the world for his voluminous researches into the Physical History of Mankind. Yet we are informed by one of his biographers that he applied himself with much zeal to the practice of his profession ; that he established a dispensary and became physician to some of the principal medical institutions of Bristol ; that he had not only a large practice in his own neighborhood, but was often called to distant consultations, and that notwithstanding the engrossing nature of these occupations, he found time to prepare and deliver lectures on Physiology and medicine, and to write an essay on fever, and one on epilepsy, and subsequently a larger work on nervous diseases. The late Dr. Morton, also publicly known as an ethnologist, amidst the onerous duties of an extensive medical practice, which was steadily increasing up to the time of his death, could find time to deliver lectures on Anatomy, to serve the Philadelphia Hospital as Consulting Physician, and to publish his two brilliant craniological works, and numerous detached papers on ethnography, hybridity and allied subjects, in addition to a valuable work on phthisis, and one on anatomy. Dr. Daniel Drake, that “zealous apostle of science,” as an English reviewer has well called him, amidst the incessant occupation entailed upon him by his practice and his lectures, was enabled, by a wise economy of his time, to bequeath to the world, at his death, a work which has justly been regarded as “one which would do honor to any country.”

But while I thus endeavor, by these examples, to stir up in you a noble ambition, I must warn you to commence your career by binding yourselves, Ulysses-like to the mast of your profession, lest in your occasional incursions into the domain of science, the voice of the syren estrange you *wholly* from your first love, and ruin your prospects as medical men. You are physicians and as such, in these days of jealous rivalry and competition, you need not expect to attain great reputation as chemists, naturalists &c. He who is ambitious of such eminence, must work long, and hard and uninterruptedly. The details of your profession are so numerous that the acquirement of them will severely tax your capacity for labor ; and the demands of your patients, sometimes necessary, sometimes frivolous, sometimes in season and very often out of season, will effectually destroy your leisure. Moreover you must never lose sight of the fact that you acquire knowledge *only to use it.* “Add to the power of discovering truth,” said Sydney Smith, “the desire of using it for the promotion of human happiness, and you have the great end and object of our existence.” The true strength of the physician lies not so much in vast and brilliant acquirements, as in the extensive and successful application of a certain amount of solid and well-chosen knowledge, which has been so thoroughly incorporated into his mind that he can use it readily upon all occasions and at the shortest notice. Superabundant knowledge in a physician—that is, more than he knows how to use efficiently—is much oftener an incumbrance than an aid to him. Hear what Dr. Latham has thoughtfully and practically said upon this subject, “My experience of human life has long since convinced me, that the number of truly learned and scientific men in the world is small. Therefore, real learning, and real science must be things of difficult attainment, since so many

are engaged in their pursuit. But be their *attainment* ever so difficult, it is not half so difficult as their *use*. * * * I am acquainted with men who never have *done*, and never can *do* anything, because they *know* too much; and I am acquainted with men possessing comparatively small knowledge, so dexterous in its use that they have ridden over the heads of others far, very far, their superiors in acquirement. * * * Fortunate indeed is the man who takes exactly the right measure of himself, and holds a just balance between what he can acquire and what he can use, be it great or small."

Disease being cosmopolitan and no respecter of persons, you will be called upon to mingle freely with all grades of people, at all times, in all places and under all circumstances. Bad men there are on the road with hurts to be healed; wretched beggars in cellars and dens with fevers to be subdued; poor artisans in hovels with pains to be assuaged. You must prepare to heal, subdue and assuage these hurts, these fevers and these pains. But the moral, the intellectual, the refined and the cultivated also have their hours of sickness and sorrow in which your sympathy and aid will be anxiously, most anxiously sought. Therefore you must take by the hand the disease stricken sons and daughters of poverty, sin and shame, as well as the favored children of wealth. But I perceive danger here and temptation, and would earnestly warn you of these "breakers ahead" in the deep water of your opening career. Let me advise you, then, in treating the sick kindly, and with much attention, to be very careful how you make familiars and associates of them all. Your active sympathy will beget friends everywhere, for friendship and sympathy are correlative and contagious. But look well to it that you take but few of these so called friends into the secret councils of your soul. Sooner or later some of them will betray you when you least expect it. Now good and great men are the salt of the earth; only they make it sweet and wholesome. The knowledge that such are your friends, raises your credit, and gives you character with the world. If it happen to such to be sick and in your hands, look well that you diligently cultivate their respect and good-fellowship. It will repay you abundantly, for by being much in their company, you will acquire the secret of their excellence, and exhibit it in your own actions. The great Napoleon knew this when he said: "You must not fight too often with one enemy, or you will teach him all your art of war." Emerson has the same idea. "Talk much with any man of vigorous mind," says he, "and we acquire very fast the habit of looking at things in the same light, and on each occurrence we anticipate his thought." Under the invisible, but potent rays of the sun, all vegetation is urged into blossom and fruit. So the continued presence of intellectual and moral excellence arouses into blooming and fruitful activity all the great and moral capabilities of the mind. Right pleasant it is to gaze upon a comely maiden, a beautiful picture, or the marble that some cunning hand hath chiseled well-nigh into life. The eye takes in such to the wholesome nourishment of the soul. The frequent contemplation of mean actions, and of low, disgusting objects, tends to deform and warp the soul clean from its high and holy purposes. Everywhere there is assimilation. Good and evil engender their like continually. This truth, it

deeply concerns you of all men to know and to feel. For your mission is to all sick people, and many sick are wicked to the last extreme ;—oftentimes, more corrupted in mind than diseased in body. When such obtrude themselves upon your path, and with uplifted hands supplicate your therapeutic aid, you dare not turn aside, nor stay your hand from the healing. This humanity forbids. This your own conscience would condemn. Bind up, then, the wounds of these wretched and poor in oil and wine, but in so doing take heed

“That the immaculate whiteness of your fame
Shall ne’er be sullied with one taint or spot.”

While you perform your part as skillful physicians, let the light and warmth of your moral excellence illuminate and vivify all about you. Let impurity ever stand abashed in the presence of your purity, and immorality cast down its eyes under the earnest look of your morality. In the remote infancy of medicine they who took the Hippocratic oath, swore by “Apollo the physician, and Aesculapius and Hygeia and Panacea, with purity and with holiness to pass their lives and practice their art.” And the code of ethics adopted by our Medical Congress strictly enjoins upon you the cultivation of purity of character, and a high standard of morality.

Against another temptation I must fortify you. You will leave this hall to-day full of confidence in the honesty, the gratitude, the friendship and the benevolence of mankind ; and secretly elated perhaps at the prospect of becoming the recipient of the respect and admiration of men, in virtue of the dignified and honorable profession which you have chosen. Ere the snows of but a few winters have whitened your path, this confidence will begin to be shaken, and unless your experience be very different from that of most men, you will earlier or later be forced to the conclusion that honesty and gratitude, though very valuable, are also very rare virtues, and that friendship and benevolence too often

“Are the soft, easy cushions, on which knaves
Repose and fatten.”

Then will come the struggle. Having, in despite of your generous impulses, and the better feelings and resolutions of this hour, lost some of your respect for mankind, you will find it not a little difficult to keep alive that active spirit of benevolence without which all your efforts to relieve the sufferings of mankind will be weak and unavailing. Day following day will find you drifting hopelessly towards the cold and apathetic sea of misanthropy, in hourly danger of making shipwreck of your happiness for life. If you would escape such a disastrous result you must take broad and elevated views of your profession and its duties on the one hand, and of humanity and its wants on the other. Your professional studies must be based upon a deep and abiding love for their intrinsic excellence, and not upon any foolish and vainglorious notions of the consideration and respect which they will bring you ; and you must practice your art not to satisfy a craving thirst for gain, but because of the noble and unlimited opportunities which it affords you of doing good. “I have always thought it a greater happiness,” said Sydenham, “to discover a certain method of curing the slightest disease, than to accumulate the largest fortune.” “My

only wish," wrote the good Dr. Fothergill, and I pray you to heed his words, "was to do what little business might fall to my share, as well as possible, and to banish all thoughts of practising physic as a money-getting trade, with the same solicitude as I would the suggestions of vice or intemperance. * * * * * I endeavor to follow my business because it is my duty, rather than my interest; *the last is inseparable from a just discharge of duty*; but I have ever wished to look at the profits in the last place, and this wish has attended me ever since my beginning." And again he says: "I wished most fervently, and I endeavor after it still, to do the business that occurred, with all the diligence I could, *as a present duty*, and endeavored to repress any rising idea of *its consequences*; such a circumscribed, unaspiring temper of mind, doing everything with diligence, humility and as in the sight of the God of healing, frees the mind from much unavailing distress and consequent disappointment."

Let these words, and the successful career of their author, encourage you to do your duty nothing doubting, and troubled neither about the reward, nor about the dignity and honor. The first will come of itself in due time, and the last two are the veriest phantoms if they spring not into existence from your own acts. If you would be revered by men you must get a firm hold upon their affections, and to do this you must show them that you are competent and ever ready to relieve them in the hour of their bitter anguish. You must show them that you are a man and no stranger to the cries of humanity; that you sympathise with and love them; that you put yourselves to much trouble and take infinite pains, and make material sacrifices in their behalf.

Go forth, then, into the world resolved to work for humanity—for Man in the Ages; go forth expecting to be tried and misrepresented and betrayed in divers ways by individual man; go forth with the abiding consciousness that you are called to a great work, and that these trials are the necessary accompaniments to the performance of this work; go forth with the conviction that the race is not always to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, but to the resolved and the persevering; go forth, into the battle of life "deliberately and persist obstinately and be very slow to find out when you are beaten;" go forth looking for assistance neither to the right hand nor the left, but self-reliant, earnestly believing in your own energies, "heart within, and God o'erhead." Forth into the world, and in all your future strivings, in all your labors, in all your pains and pleasures, may the strong, right arm of Jehovah Rophi—the Lord the Healer—

"Before, behind thee, and on every hand,
Enwheel thee round."

Philadelphia, College of Medicine,

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